

lasting life as we will to gain the treasure that perishes with the using.

But is this really true? How many people, for example, would journey to the icy solitudes of the arctic and consent to die there, if by so doing they should be received into the habitations of everlasting joy? We venture the opinion that where one has gone for gold ten would go for heaven. It is a law of nature that any free natural force, like electricity for example, will travel in the direction of the least resistance. We believe that the same law is universal, that it obtains in the moral and spiritual realm as well as in the natural. Believing this, we step to the next hypothesis that it is easier to travel to Alaska, easier to endure all the hardships and privations incident to that journey, easier to do anything that the gold hunters are doing, than to be a Christian.

We further believe that religious teachers are responsible for a great and wide-spread misconception at this point. They are in the habit of saying that it is easy, so easy, to be saved. Only look. Only believe. What could be easier? No effort is required whatever. Indeed, effort of any kind is a hindrance instead of a help. We have only to surrender like a chip to the torrent or like a feather to the wind, and be floated or wafted into salvation. This is the theory of personal salvation so often expounded from our modern pulpit, a theory based neither upon the Scriptures nor upon experience, but upon the mistaken hypothesis of over-anxious preachers, who know nothing of either human nature or natural law, that to make the Gospel journey an exceedingly easy one will tempt the indolent multitudes to walk therein.

No greater or more deplorable exhibition of ignorance ever masqueraded in the guise of professional knowledge. The human mind is so constituted that it has no opinion whatever of moral or of intellectual feather-weights, nor of the system which produces them. A salvation which only requires a puff of theological wind, or a soul that can be puffed by such a wind, or a theology which is nothing more than a puff of wind, are all equally valueless. This do nothing, supinely passive, spineless, nerveless teaching has reduced religion to terms of contempt, and mistaking this travesty of religion for the real article, men have instinctively turned away from it, choosing rather the vanishing realities of materialism than the unreal evanishments of the ignorant preacher.

As a matter of fact, nothing is more difficult than Christian life. Nothing requires so strenuous a purpose, so large and continuous expenditure of energy, so much courage, so extreme a cost, to the limits of all that we have and all that we are. Listen: "He that forsaketh not all that he hath," "He that loveth life more than me," "He that forsaketh not father and mother, houses, lands, wife, children," "He that saveth his life shall lose it," "He that taketh not up his cross." Shall we go on to multiply these trenchant passages that cut to the bone? There is the

Christianity, the salvation that Jesus and his apostles taught. Does it sound easy? Is it a flowery bed of ease? Is there a suggestion of floating and wafting about it? Can you conceive of any element of cost that is not there? This is not simply the *philosophy* of the Christian religion. It is **THE** Christian religion, that which Christ brought into the world; and if we teach it, men will argue: "That which costs so great a price must be worth having. I will sell all that I have here and buy this pearl of great price. I will climb this arduous mountain whose top is bathed in glory. I will fight this fight of faith." And in this religion of sacrifice, this religion of strenuous life, this religion of the heroic battle, they will discern God's truth as of old it came from the lips of Him who is the way, the truth and the life.

#### THE ISOLATED MEMBER

G. W. RENCH

When brethren move away from their church into a locality where there are no Brethren churches, what should determine his course in regard to worship? Should he go into some other church in order to have a "church home," or should he remain "outside?" These questions have been variously answered. Some say "find a church home." I say so too, if a "church home" is to be placed above loyalty to God's Word. Some say "your conscience will have to decide." But why should one's conscience be the arbiter here, when it was refused on the question of triune immersion? Numbers of people satisfy their conscience by remaining out of the church entirely. Where in the Word are we told to follow our consciences in preference to God's Word? We have such commands as "Follow me"; "Keep my commandments"; "Be a doer of the word"; "This do, and thou shalt live," but not once the command, "follow your consciences." Why, your conscience is simply your idea of right. But if every man's idea of right is to prevail, what will become of God's idea of right?

When it comes to questions upon which God has not spoken, such as, how many times I shall eat in a day? or, shall I wear a hat or a cap? I grant every body the right to follow his conscience, if he has one. But what right has any man to set up his conscience against God's decree, or any man to advise another to do so?

Every isolated member should ask himself in the light of God's Word, and as soon as he becomes a member of His body, What is the message God has given me to deliver? He will doubtless remember his marching orders, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." He can't excuse himself by saying, "Why, I am making disciples with these Christian people." The Master said, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you," and if he is not doing this he is disobeying God, "church

home" or no "church home." Don't hold up before me the value of a "church home," if it is necessary to throw away the plain teachings of God in order to get one! Better be concerned about God's home, prepared only for the faithful.

Brethren, for the life of me, I can not see wherein the duties of the isolated member differ from those of any other. All have been commanded to "be thou faithful until death."

My brother, if you have no "church home" where you can keep the commandments, instead of "going in" with a people where you can neither teach nor keep the "all things" of Jesus, why don't you go about making disciples, in the full sense, as Jesus told you to do? Could there be any thing more glorious?

Take the EVANGELIST and instead of using it for wrapping paper, hand it out to your neighbors. (By mistake I wrote the first word of this sentence "fake" instead of "take." No, don't "fake the EVANGELIST," pay for it.) Send for a quantity of tracts. If you know what is in them yourself hand them out to your neighbors according to their needs. Organize a cottage prayer-meeting, giving much attention to the study of such portions of the Word as is neglected by the community. After you have kept at it for a year or two, send for a preacher. Select one who will not put every faith on an equality with every other "wind of doctrine," and thus sweep away your hard but glorious work for Christ but select one who will teach the "all things" as you have been doing. By so doing you will not only have a "church home," but you can go home "rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves."

#### COMPULSORY CHRISTIANITY

R. R. TEETER

In Parochial and Plain Sermons, volume IV, J. H. Newman says, "If one person can be found who thinks sickness, disappointment, anxiety, affliction, suffering, fear, to be such grievous ills, that he had rather not have been born, that man is, as regards his very existence, what the Christian is relatively to his new birth—an unwilling recipient of a gift." "We are not asked whether we will choose this world, before we are born into it. Such is our condition as men; it is the same as Christians." "For instance, we are not allowed to grow up before choosing our religion. We find ourselves Christians; and our duty is, not to consider what we should do if we were not Christians."

To me this is one of the strangest doctrines I ever met, tho it has for its foundation, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in." Yes, I always knew that the apostle teaches us that eternal life is the "gift of God," but never, until I read after Rev. Newman, did I know that we are compelled to receive this gift whether we will or no.

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." I fail to discover an "unwilling re-